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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001446

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TAGS: PREL PGOV TU

SUBJECT: TURKEY: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES UPCOMING LOCAL ELECTIONS WITH OPPOSITION ANAP LEADER NAS

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric Edelman. Reason 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a March 2 meeting, Ambassador solicited opposition Motherland Party (ANAP) leader Nesrin Nas's views on March 28 local elections. Throughout the discussion, Nas showed amazingly little concern for the poor showing she admitted her party would have, and offered no strategy for the party's revival. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a lengthy monologue on local elections, newly installed ANAP Party leader Nas made the following points, as she indicated ANAP was doomed to a repeat of the party's last election cycle disaster:

- Faced with certain failure on March 28, ANAP is trying to restructure "from scratch";

- In the last election, Justice and Development Party (AKP) candidates gave voters hope that a solution to Turkey's macroeconomic problems could be found. Until a rival political party convinces voters it can reverse Turkey's deteriorating standard of living, AK will remain in power. ANAP has not found the solution;

- AKP's success in the municipal elections will crush the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), turning Turkey into a one political party state. Election results

¶3. (C) Dodging questions about ANAP's election strategy, Nas had surprisingly little hope and even less strategy for her party's revival, admitting "We're all shocked. No one has the answers." When pressed to discuss target voter bases or to explain how her party might go about winning back its AKP defectors, she surrendered: "We're staying away from Anatolia, we don't have a chance".

¶4. (C) The political landscape after AKPs presumed election landslide, predicts Nas, will be marked by intense pressure from new mayors for funds to follow through on their campaign promises. "So far AK has neglected to step forward on economic issues. They won't be able to avoid it after the elections."

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Nesrin Nas continues to demonstrate her political ineptitude and to underscore how out of touch ANAP has become with Anatolia. END COMMENT.

EDELMAN